

May 15, 2008

U.S. Government Promotes Training for El Alto Carpenters

With the support of the U.S. Government, through its Agency for International Development (USAID), more than 25 carpenters and owners of small businesses in the city of El Alto completed a theoretical-practical training program in carpentry. The program was designed to improve their productive and competitive skills.

These entrepreneurs are members of the Association of Micro-business Carpenters of El Alto (ACMEA, in Spanish) and they produce furniture for the local market. Previously, the carpenters sold their work at the local 16 de Julio fair, a giant flea market in El Alto, because of their uneven production and quality standards. With the completion of training, which built upon the carpenters' previous skills, several of these small businesses already have been able to win public bids and to extend their portfolio of client. Growth potential to produce high quality furniture for other local and national markets is significant.

The training program was designed on the basis of five complementary modules, which reinforced and expanded existing knowledge and skills. These modules were:

- Market trends and technology
- Management and industrial design
- Wood finishing techniques for furniture
- Selection, sharpening, and appropriate use of cutting tools
- Best practices in the use of electrical tools

The program's closing ceremony, which included the delivery of certificates, took place on Friday, May 16, at the Centro de Negocios de El Alto.

Additionally, municipal authorities, lumber entrepreneurs, and representatives of related institutions attended the event, which also officially launched a new USAID-supported initiative of a series of wood and furniture trade fairs. The first event, the Wood Fair, will take place in June in the Fair Field of Següencoma. The second, the MADEMAC fair, will be carried out in El Alto. Representatives of the Bolivian Furniture Institute offered information on these two important trade events that will benefit Bolivian entrepreneurs.